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Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

| Office Action Summary | Application No. | Applicant(s) | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | 09/607,852 | LAPSTUN ET AL. | |
| | Examiner | Art Unit | |
| | Blaine Basom | 2173 | |

*-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --*

**Period for Reply**

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

**Status**

1)☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on *01 March 2004*.

2a)☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b)☒ This action is non-final.

3)☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

**Disposition of Claims**

4)☒ Claim(s) *1-52* is/are pending in the application.

4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.

5)☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.

6)☒ Claim(s) *1-52* is/are rejected.

7)☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.

8)☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

**Application Papers**

9)☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.

10)☒ The drawing(s) filed on *30 June 2000* is/are: a)☒ accepted or b)☐ objected to by the Examiner.

Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).

Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).

11)☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

**Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119**

12)☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).

a)☒ All b)☐ Some * c)☐ None of:

1.☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.

2.☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.

3.☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

**Attachment(s)**

1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08) Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____.
4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____.
5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
6) ☐ Other: _____.

## DETAILED ACTION

### *Response to Arguments*

The Examiner acknowledges the Applicants' amendments to claims 1, 4, 18-19, 27, 29, 30, and 41-42, and the addition of new claims 47-52. The Applicants subsequently argue that neither Dymetman et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,330976), Zdybel, Jr. et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,486,686), Kaufeld et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,859,976), Kennedy (U.S. Patent No.6,330,859), and Ishizuka et al. (5,592,280), alone or in combination, teaches generating a "tree" of versions of a conferencing form, as has been added to the independent claims of the present application. In response, the Examiner presents the U.S. Patent of Horibe et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,101,532), which as shown below, teaches generating such a tree of versions. The Applicants' arguments have thus been considered, but are moot in view of the following new grounds of rejection.

### *Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103*

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

> (a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negatived by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 1-11, 15-20, 22-24, 26-36, 38-43, 46-48, and 51-52 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,330,976, which is attributed to Dymetman et al. (and hereafter referred to as "Dymetman"), over U.S. Patent No. 5,486,686, which is attributed to Zdybel, Jr. et al. (and hereafter referred to as "Zdybel"), and also over U.S. Patent

No. 6,101,532, which is attributed to Horibe et al. (and hereafter referred to as "Horibe"). In general, Dymetman discloses a method for encoding information on paper, whereby this encoded information specifies "actions," such as the retrieval of supplementary documentation. This encoded information is invisible to the user, but may be deciphered via a specially designed pointer (see column 3, lines 21-63; and column 4, line 63 - column 5, line 4). Regarding the claimed invention, Dymetman discloses that this encoded paper may be implemented along with a fax machine to provide email capabilities to a user, eliminating the need for a computer (see column 22, lines 10-23). It is therefore understood that Dymetman teaches a method of enabling remote conferencing between conference participants, wherein particularly, such remote conferencing is enabled via this encoded paper.

With respect to claim 1, Dymetman discloses that a user emails a message by first writing the message on "NotePaper," which is specially-designed paper with information encoded upon it for sending notes (see column 22, lines 10-15). The user writes this message using the above-described pointer, which also acts as a pen (see column 17, lines 13-21). Next, the user chooses a person to which to send the message by selecting the person in an "address book" document, itself encoded paper (see column 22, lines 15-18). Lastly, the message is sent by selecting a "Send" icon on the NotePaper (see column 22, lines 18-23). Dymetman further discloses that when a user positions the pointer on encoded paper, such as the above-described NotePaper, the encoded information in the vicinity of the tip of the pointer is read and decoded by special processing circuitry. This decoded information comprises a "page identifier," which concerns the identity of the encoded paper, and also a "location code," which concerns the location of the pointer within the paper (see column 9, lines 10-28). A network computer system, particularly a

server, may receive the page identifier and the location code in order to identify a particular "action" to perform in which the user is intending to perform (see column 9, lines 24-55), such as that associated with the above-described Send icon. This Send icon, for example, is understood to be representative of a parameter for sending the message. It is also interpreted that the recipient of the email receives an image of this NotePaper (see column 22, lines 20-23), which thus includes the Send icon representative of this parameter. Therefore, Dymetman teaches: providing a participant with at least one conferencing form, namely the above-described NotePaper, which contains information relating to a remote conferencing session and which includes coded data, namely a page identifier and location code, which is indicative of an identity of the conferencing form and of at least one reference point of the conferencing form; receiving in a computer system indicating data from a sensing device, namely the pointer, which is operated by the conference participant, the indicating data regarding the identity of the conferencing form and a position of the sensing device relative to the conferencing form, the sensing device, when placed in an operative position relative to the conferencing form, sensing the indicating data using at least some of the coded data; identifying in the computer system and from the indicating data, at least one parameter, namely an "action" to perform, which relates to the conferencing session; and, providing at least one other conference participant with at least one conferencing form containing information representative of the at least one parameter. Dymetman notes that the NotePaper, which contains human readable and machine readable data, is printed by specialist "coded substrate suppliers" (see column 11, lines 13-15). Consequently, it is understood that a fax machine cannot print such NotePaper, and therefore, the recipient who receives a faxed image of this NotePaper cannot interact with the NotePaper in the same way as

the sender of the NotePaper. The recipient cannot use a specialized pointer to select various actions encoded within the paper. Thus, Dymetman discloses a recipient conferencing form, specifically the recipient's faxed image of the NotePaper, the recipient conferencing form containing information representative of the parameter relating to the conferencing session. This recipient conferencing form, however, does not include recipient coded data indicative of the identity of the conferencing form and of at least one reference point of the recipient conferencing form, as is recited in claim 1. Consequently, Dymetman does not teach that the computer system receives recipient indicating data from a recipient sensing device operated by another conference participant involved in the conference session, whereas expressed in claim 1, the recipient indicating data regards the identity of the recipient conferencing form and a position of the recipient sensing device relative to the recipient conferencing form, the recipient sensing device, when placed in an operative position relative to the recipient conferencing form, sensing at least some of the recipient coded data and generating the recipient indicating data using at least some of the sensed recipient coded data. Additionally, Dymetman does not explicitly disclose that the computer system generates a "tree" of versions of the conferencing form, wherein the indicating data is used to create a first version of the conferencing form and the recipient indicating data is used to create a second version of the conferencing form, as is recited in claim 1.

Like Dymetman, Zdybel discusses a technique for encoding paper such that the paper comprises human readable and machine readable information (for example, see column 4, lines 45-63). Like that taught by Dymetman, this machine readable information may be invisible to the user (see column 8, line 51 – column 9, line 12) and may comprise coded data indicative of the identity of, and various reference points in, the document to which it is associated (see

column 10, lines 12-27). Zdybel further discloses that the paper comprising the machine and human readable data can be faxed so that the received image of the paper still comprises both machine readable and human readable data (for example, see column 7, lines 38-43; column 9, lines 6-12; and column 10, line 52 – column 11, line 9).

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art, having the teachings of Dymetman and Zdybel before him at the time the invention was made, to modify the NotePaper taught by Dymetman such that both the machine and human readable information comprised within the paper can be copied and printed by fax machine, as is done by Zdybel. It would have been advantageous to one of ordinary skill to utilize such a combination because both the human and machine readable data is useful by the recipient of such faxed documents, as is demonstrated by Zdybel. Consequently, with this combination of Dymetman and Zdybel, the recipient of a faxed NotePaper is able to interact with the NotePaper in the same way as the sender of the NotePaper; the recipient NotePaper comprises information representative of the parameter relating to a conferencing session and also comprises recipient coded data indicative of the identity of the conferencing form and of at least one reference point of the recipient conferencing form. The recipient is able to use a specialized pointer to sense such data, and like the sender, augment and send the document to another individual or back to the original sender. Thus this combination further teaches that the computer system receives recipient indicating data from a recipient sensing device operated by another conference participant involved in the conference session, whereas expressed in claim 1, the recipient indicating data regards the identity of the recipient conferencing form and a position of the recipient sensing device relative to the recipient conferencing form, the recipient sensing device, when placed in an operative

position relative to the recipient conferencing form, sensing at least some of the recipient coded data and generating the recipient indicating data using at least some of the sensed recipient coded data. The message created by the indicating data of the original sender is considered a first version of the conferencing form, and the response message created by the indicating data of the recipient is considered a second version of the conferencing form. However, neither Dymetman nor Zdybel explicitly disclose that the computer system generates a "tree" of such versions of the conferencing form, as is recited in claim 1.

Like Dymetman and Zdybel, Horibe presents a system whereby users may converse via the electronic transmission of messages. For example, a first user may submit a first message, and a second user may submit a second message in response to the first message (see column 4, lines 29-42). Horibe teaches that a central computer, specifically a server, may retain these messages in a data structure, a representation of which is displayed to the user as a "discussion tree" (see column 7, lines 35-58). This discussion tree comprises a node for each message submitted by each user; a user may display a message by selecting its corresponding node (see column 7, lines 44-58).

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art, having the teachings of Dymetman, Zdybel, and Horibe before him at the time the invention was made, to modify the computer system taught by Dymetman and Zdybel, such that it maintains the plurality of versions of the conference form in a tree that is displayable to a user, as is taught by Horibe. It would have been advantageous to one of ordinary skill to utilize this combination, because such a tree allows a user to review the proceedings of a discussion, as is demonstrated by Horibe.

Regarding claim 27, the above-described email method of Dymetman, Zdybel, and Horibe is implemented with one or more forms and a pointer comprising an image-reading device, an image-decoding device, and a network communication device (see column 15, lines 15-58 of Dymetman). The combination of this pointer and the forms, implemented as described above, is considered a system like that of claim 27, which is for enabling remote conferencing between participants.

In reference to claims 2 and 28, Dymetman discloses that the parameter associated with a portion of encoded paper, such as the above-described Send icon, can relate to a zone of the encoded paper, and that this zone is identified by the above-described location identifier (see column 3, lines 61-63). Consequently, it is understood that the parameter relating to the conferencing session is associated with at least one zone of the conferencing form, and that the computer system identifies this parameter using the zone.

Regarding claims 3 and 29, Dymetman discloses that the pointer may operate in "Mouse Mode," whereby encoded data regarding pointer location is identified at a set frequency (see column 27, lines 24-44). In other words, data regarding pointer movement is received. Consequently, it is understood that with the above-described NotePaper being operated on with a pointer in Mouse Mode, the computer system receives data regarding movement of the pointer relative to the NotePaper, the pointer sensing its movement using at least some of the coded data, and also, the computer system identifies a parameter of the conferencing session from movement being at least partially within a zone.

As per claim 4, it is understood that for the reasons described above in the rejections for claims 1 and 3, the combination of Dymetman, Zdybel, and Horibe teaches a method of enabling

remote conferencing between conference participants via at least one conferencing form, specifically NotePaper, containing information relating to a remote conferencing session and including coded data indicative of at least one parameter of the remote conferencing session and also via at least one recipient conferencing form, specifically a faxed image of the NotePaper, which is remote from the conferencing form and which contains information representative of the parameter and recipient coded data indicative of the identity of the recipient conferencing form and of at least one reference point of the recipient conferencing form, the method including the steps of: receiving, in a server, data from a sensing device operated by a first conference participant regarding the at least one parameter and regarding movement of the sensing device relative to the conferencing form, the sensing device, when moved relative to the conferencing form, sensing at least some of the coded data and generating the data regarding the at least one parameter using at least some of the sensed coded data and generating the data regarding its own movement relative to the conferencing form; interpreting, in the server, the movement of the sensing device as it relates to the parameter; receiving, in the server, data from a recipient sensing device operated by a second conference participant regarding the parameter and regarding movement of the recipient sensing device relative to the recipient conferencing form, the recipient sensing device, when moved relative to the recipient conferencing from, sensing at least some of the recipient coded data and generating the data regarding the parameter using at least some of the sensed recipient coded data and generating the data regarding its own movement relative to the recipient conferencing form; and generating in the computer system a tree of versions of the conferencing form, wherein the data from the sensing device operated by the first conference participant is used to create a first version of the conferencing form and the

data from the recipient sensing device operated by the second conference participant is used to create a second version of the conferencing form.

Regarding claim 30, the above-described email method of Dymetman, Zdybel, and Horibe is implemented with one or more forms and a pointer comprising an image-reading device, an image-decoding device, and a network communication device (see column 15, lines 15-58 of Dymetman). The combination of this pointer and the forms, implemented as described above, is considered a system like that of claim 30, which is for enabling remote conferencing between participants.

Regarding claim 22, it is understood that a user of the above-described computerless email system of Dymetman, Zdybel, and Horibe may send an email message to a plurality of recipients or to a single recipient, as is known in the art. Consequently, it is interpreted that the conferencing forms may be distributed using a mixture of multicast and pointcast communications protocols.

As per claims 26 and 46, Dymetman discloses that the email is transmitted using a fax machine (see column 22, lines 12-23). As is known in the art, such a fax machine uses telephone lines to communicate. A fax machine is therefore considered telephone communication means. Consequently, the combination of Dymetman, Zdybel, and Horibe teaches providing the conference participants with telephone communication means for use during the remote conferencing session.

In reference to claim 31, Dymetman discloses that the parameter associated with a portion of encoded paper, such as the above-described Send icon, can relate to a zone of the encoded paper, and that this zone is identified by the above-described location identifier (see

column 3, lines 61-63). Consequently, it is understood that the parameter relating to the conferencing session is associated with at least one zone of the conferencing form, and that the computer system identifies this parameter using the zone.

Regarding claim 32, the system disclosed by Dymetman and Zdybel, as described above in the rejection for claim 30, includes a pointer, i.e. sensing device.

In regard to claims 5 and 6, the NotePaper of Dymetman, Zdybel, and Horibe includes a Send icon, which as described above, represents a parameter for sending a message to a remote conference participant. This parameter is considered an "action parameter" as expressed in claim 5, since an operation for sending the message occurs with respect to this parameter. Moreover, this parameter is selected from the group comprising: sending an invitation to a conference session; starting a conference session; ending a conference session; viewing the history of a conference session; sending a message to a participant during a conference session; viewing messages sent during a conference session; ordering the printing of a palette of available line styles and colors; ordering the printing of a whiteboard page; updating a whiteboard page; and ordering the reprinting of a new whiteboard page. Specifically, the parameter is associated with sending a message to a participant during a conference session.

Concerning claims 7 and 8, the address book document disclosed by Dymetman is encoded paper upon which a user may select, with a pointer, a person to which to send a message, as is described above in the rejection for claim 1. As this address book is directly associated with sending the message, the address book is likewise considered a conference form. Also, the person to whom to send the message is considered an option parameter, since the operation of sending the message is associated with this parameter. Moreover, Dymetman

discloses that the above-described computer system identifies if the user has entered a hand-drawn mark (see column 17, lines 13-35). The combination of Dymetman, Zdybel, and Horibe thus teaches an option parameter, and also, identifying in the computer system that the participant has entered a hand-drawn mark by means of a pointer and effecting, in the computer system, an operation associated with the option parameter. Additionally, Dymetman teaches that this option parameter is associated with at least one of: an access level; a message recipient; a line style; and a line color. Specifically, the option parameter is associated with a message recipient.

With respect to claims 9-11, Dymetman discloses that a user's hand-written message may be converted to ASCII text, *if desired* (see column 31, lines 23-25). Consequently, it is interpreted that a parameter may be associated with the above-described NotePaper such that when chosen, the message text is converted to ASCII text, i.e. computer text. Such a parameter is considered a text parameter, like that of the claimed invention, whereby the computer system identifies that the participant has entered hand-written text by means of a pointer and effects, in the computer system, an operation associated with the text parameter. Specifically, the handwritten text is converted to computer text in the computer system. Moreover, such a parameter is associated with at least on of: a session description; a conference start data; a start time; an end time; a participant identification; a conference session purpose; a message subject description; and a message text. Specifically, the parameter is associated with message text.

Regarding claims 15 and 16, it is understood that a user may make drawings on the above-described NotePaper. Dymetman discloses that a user's drawings may be subject to various operations, such as smoothing and shape-recognition (see column 31, lines 7-17).

Consequently, it is interpreted that one or more parameters may be associated with the above-described NotePaper such that when chosen, any shapes drawn are smoothed or identified as a circle, square, etc. Such parameters are considered graphical parameters like that of the present application, whereby the computer system identifies that the participant has entered hand-drawn graphical information by means of the sensing device and effects, in the computer system, an operation associated with the graphical parameter. Furthermore, such parameters are understood to be associated with a markup to a whiteboard page, wherein this case, the NotePaper is considered a whiteboard page.

As per claims 33-36 and 38, the conferencing forms disclosed by Dymetman, Zdybel, and Horibe are associated with at least one parameter selected from the group comprising an action parameter of the conference session, an option parameter of the conference session, a text parameter of he conference session, and authorization parameter of the conference session, and a graphical parameter of the conference session. In particular, the conferencing forms are associated with an action parameter, an option parameter, a text parameter, and a graphical parameter, as is shown above in the rejection for claims 5, 7, 9, and 15. More specifically, the action parameter disclosed by Dymetman is selected from the group comprising: sending an invitation to a conference session; starting a conference session; ending a conference session; viewing the history of a conference session; sending a message to a participant during a conference session; viewing messages sent during a conference session; ordering the printing of a palette of available line styles and colors; ordering the printing of a whiteboard page; updating a whiteboard page; and ordering the reprinting of a new whiteboard page. Specifically, as shown above in the rejection for claim 6, the action parameter is associated with sending a message to a

participant during a conference session. The option parameter disclosed by Dymetman is associated with at least one of: an access level; a message recipient; a line style; and a line color. Specifically, the option parameter is associated with a message recipient, as is shown above in the rejection for claim 8. The text parameter disclosed by Dymetman is associated with at least on of: a session description; a conference start date; a start time; an end time; a participant identification; a conference session purpose; a message subject description; and a message text. Specifically, the text parameter is associated with message text, as is shown above in the rejection for claim 11. Lastly, the graphical parameter is associated with a markup to a whiteboard page, as is shown above in the rejection for claim 16.

As for claim 17, the NotePaper described above contains information relating to at least one of: booking a conference session; canceling a conference session; controlling a conference session; selecting invitees to a conference session; inviting participants to a conference session; composing messages in a conference session; sending messages in a conference session; viewing messages in a conference session; printing a palette of available line styles and colors in a conference session; selecting a line style and color in a conference session; viewing the history of a conference session; printing whiteboard pages; updating whiteboard pages; reprinting whiteboard pages; pasting content to a whiteboard page; and ending a conferencing session. For example, the NotePaper contains information relating to sending messages in a conferencing session, as is described above in the rejection for claim 1.

As per claims 18-20 and 41-43, it is interpreted that the NotePaper and other conference forms disclosed by Dymetman, Zdybel, and Horibe may be printed on demand by selecting a "Print" icon (see column 22, line 28 of Dymetman). Consequently, it is understood that the

above-described system comprises a printer. It is further interpreted that the conferencing form is printed on a surface of a surface-defining means and, at the same time that the conferencing form is printed, the coded data is also printed, whereby the coded data is printed to be substantially invisible in the visible spectrum (see column 11, lines 5-27; and lines 47-51 of Dymetman).

In regard to claims 23 and 40, Dymetman discloses that the above-described pointer may contain an identification means, specifically a "pointer identifier," which imparts a unique identity to the pointer and identifies it as being associated with a user, whereby it is interpreted that the identity of this participant may be monitored (see column 17, lines 39-51).

Referring to claim 24, Dymetman does not disclose that a separate display device is used in the above-described email method. Consequently, it is understood that the conferencing forms of Dymetman provide all required information relating to the remote conferencing session, thus eliminating the need for a separate display device.

With respect to claim 39, Dymetman discloses that the above-described pointer may function as a pen (see column 17, lines 13-21). It is consequently interpreted that such a pointer includes a "marking nib" like that recited in claim 39.

In regard to claims 47 and 48, Horibe teaches that, after a second participant responds to an original message posted by a first participant, an additional participant, or the second participant again, may respond to the first message (see column 5, line 50 – column 7, line 34). In such a case, the associated discussion tree branches, with the original message being at the root of the branch, and each of the plurality of response messages being a distinct child of the root (see the discussion tree of FIG. 4, in addition to its associated description in column 7, lines

35-58). As described above, such messages each correspond to a distinct version of the conferencing form of Dymetman and Zdybel, and whereby responses to a conference form modify the form. It is therefore understood that with the above-described combination of Dymetman, Zdybel, and Horibe, the tree of versions of the conference form branches when the first version of the conference form is modified, by a participant's response to the first version, after the second version of the conference form is created.

Referring to claims 51 and 52, Horibe teaches that a symbol may be associated with each message in a discussion tree (see FIG. 4 - note the "□" symbol next to each message in the tree). Such a symbol is considered a thumbnail image, as it represents a corresponding message. Additionally, Horibe discloses that a user may request to have such a discussion tree displayed (see column 7, lines 44-58). As Dymetman and Zdybel are driven towards a paper-based interface, it is interpreted that with the above-described combination of Dymetman, Zdybel, and Horibe, a user may similarly request to have the tree of versions displayed, whereby in response, the tree is printed out on paper. This paper, with the tree of versions imprinted upon it, is considered a conference form.

Claims 12-14 and 37 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over the combination of Dymetman, Zdybel, and Horibe, which is described above, and also over U.S. Patent No. 5,859,967, which is attributed to Kaufeld et al. (and hereafter referred to as Kaufeld). As described above, the computerless email method of Dymetman, Zdybel, and Horibe teaches a method and system like that of claims 1, 4, and 33. Dymetman further teaches that the above-described pointer may be used to write a signature, whereby the information captured by the

pointer may be used in authorization applications (see column 31, lines 7-17). However, neither Dymetman, Zdybel, nor Horibe explicitly disclose the use of such authorization applications in conjunction with the above-described computerless email method. In other words, the combination does not explicitly suggest that the conferencing forms specify an authorization parameter of the conferencing session, whereby as expressed in claim12, a computer system identifies that the participant has entered a handwritten signature by means of the pointer and effects, in the computer system, an operation associated with the authorization parameter. Consequently, the combination of Dymetman, Zdybel, and Horibe does not disclose that the computerless email method includes verifying that this signature is that of the participant, as is recited in claim 13, or that the authorization parameter is associated with updating a whiteboard page, as is expressed in claims 14 and 37.

Like Dymetman, Zdybel, and Horibe, Kaufeld presents a method and system for sending an email message to a recipient, whereby the recipient receives the email message via fax machine (see column 1, lines 12-17). Regarding the claimed invention, Kaufeld discloses that when the email message is sent to the recipient, the message is checked to determine if it is from an authorized user (see column 1, line 50 – column 2, line 43).

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art, having the teachings of Dymetman, Zdybel, Horibe, and Kaufeld before him at the time the invention was made, to modify the method taught by Dymetman, Zdybel, and Horibe to include the teachings of Kaufeld such that any sent email messages are checked for proper authorization. In other words, it would have been obvious to modify the conferencing forms taught by Dymetman, Zdybel, and Horibe such that they require signature authorization when sending a message. Such

conferencing forms thus specify an authorization parameter of the conferencing session, whereby a computer system identifies that the participant has entered a handwritten signature by means of the pointer and effects, in the computer system, an operation associated with the authorization parameter, specifically sending the message to the recipient if the signature is verified as that of the participant. Lastly, it is understood that this authorization parameter is associated with updating a whiteboard page, i.e. sending the message. It would have been advantageous to one of ordinary skill to utilize such a combination because authorization of sent email messages increases security, as is taught by Kaufeld.

Claims 21 and 44 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over the combination of Dymetman, Zdybel, and Horibe, which is described above, and also over U.S. Patent No. 6,330,589, which is attributed to Kennedy. As shown above, the combination of Dymetman, Zdybel, and Horibe presents a method and system like that of claims 1, 4, and 27, whereby a user uses conferencing forms, specifically NotePaper and an address book, to generate and send email messages to a particular recipient. This combination, however, does not explicitly teach retaining a retrievable record of each conferencing form generated, the conferencing form being retrievable using its identity as contained in its coded data, as is expressed in claims 21 and 44.

Like Dymetman, Zdybel, and Horibe, Kennedy discusses using email as a medium for a conversation (see column 1, lines 7-10). More specifically, Kennedy discusses organizing email messages such that all messages relating to a particular conversation may be determined (see column 1, lines 48-67). Regarding the claimed invention, Kennedy discloses maintaining a

database of each email message generated, which is interpreted to be used to retrieve and display prior messages (see column 2, line 33 – column 3, line 2). It is understood that each message is retrieved using a "message identifier," which like the page identifier taught by Dymetman, uniquely identifies each message (see column 3, lines 30-44).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art, having the teachings of Dymetman, Zdybel, Horibe, and Kennedy before him at the time the invention was made, to modify the method taught by Dymetman, Zdybel, and Horibe to include the teachings of Kennedy such that a database for keeping a retrievable record of each conferencing form is generated, each conferencing form being retrievable using its page identifier included in its coded data. It would have been advantageous to one of ordinary skill to utilize such a combination because the ability to retrieve and view all email messages in a conversation thread is useful, as is demonstrated by Kennedy.

Claims 25 and 45 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over the combination of Dymetman, Zdybel, and Horibe, which is described above, and also over U.S. Patent No. 5,592,280, which is attributed to Ishizuka et al. (and hereafter referred to as "Ishizuka"). As shown above, the combination of Dymetman, Zdybel, and Horibe presents a method and system like that of claims 1, 4, and 41, whereby a user uses conferencing forms, specifically NotePaper and an address book, to generate and send email messages to a particular recipient. As also shown above, a printer or fax machine is used to print these forms. This combination, however, does not explicitly disclose that this printer or fax machine includes a binding means for binding the pages, as is expressed in claims 25 and 45.

Along the lines of Dymetman, Ishizuka presents a printer and fax machine, whereby regarding the claimed invention, the printer and fax machine are provided with a stapler to bind any printed pages (see column 1, lines 5-32).

It would have been therefore obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art, having the teachings of Dymetman, Zdybel, Horibe, and Ishizuka before him at the time the invention was made, to modify the method taught by Dymetman, Zdybel, and Horibe to include the teachings of Ishizuka such that the printer includes a binding means, specifically a stapler, for binding the printed forms. It would have been advantageous to one of ordinary skill to utilize such a combination because, as is taught by Ishizuka, binding printed forms is convenient for distributing copied sheets (see column 1, lines 12-14).

Claims 49 and 50 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over the combination of Dymetman, Zdybel, and Horibe, which is described above, and also over the U.S. Patent of Kennedy, which is additionally described above. As shown above, the combination of Dymetman, Zdybel, and Horibe presents a system and method like that of claims 47 and 48, respectively, whereby a tree of versions is generated to maintain various versions of a conference form. Horibe particularly teaches that a discussion tree may comprise, for each message in the tree, the conference participant who sent the message, and the contents of the message (see the discussion tree of FIG. 4, and its associated description in column 7, lines 35-58). Consequently, with the above-described tree of versions taught by Dymetman, Zdybel, and Horibe, it is understood that each version in the tree of versions similarly records the conference participant who made markups to the version, and the contents of the markups. However, neither

Dymetman, Zdybel, nor Horibe explicitly disclose that each version also records the date and time the version was created, as is recited in each of claims 49 and 50.

Like Dymetman, Zdybel, and Horibe, Kennedy discusses using email as a medium for a conversation (see column 1, lines 7-10), and specifically discusses organizing email messages into a tree-like data structure, which may be displayed to the user (see column 1, lines 36-67). Regarding the claimed invention, Kennedy teaches that each message in this data structure maintains the date and time the message was sent (see column 3, lines 30-44, for example).

It would have therefore been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art, having the teachings of Dymetman, Zdybel, Horibe, and Kennedy before him at the time the invention was made, to modify the tree of versions taught by Dymetman, Zdybel, and Horibe, such that each version in the tree records the date and time the version was created, as is taught by Kennedy. It would have been advantageous to one of ordinary skill to utilize such a combination, because recording this time with each version allows the user to better ascertain the proceedings of a conversation, by viewing the time each conference form was submitted, as is demonstrated by Kennedy.

***Conclusion***

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Blaine Basom whose telephone number is (703) 305-7694. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday through Friday, from 8:30 am to 5:30 pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, John Cabeca can be reached on (703) 308-3116. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see http://pair-direct.uspto.gov. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

btb

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